

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) A method of sterilizing poultry litter, the method using an apparatus comprising a flamer having at least one burner situated under a hood, ~~said burner pointing primarily more downwardly than horizontally to cause the flame to extend more downwardly than horizontally from the burner, the hood being disposed completely over the top~~ of a flame from the flamer; a hitch for attaching said flamer to a prime mover; the method of sterilizing poultry litter comprising:

- (a) holding poultry in confinement such that litter accumulates to form a surface;
- (b) transporting said apparatus to the litter surface;
- (c) setting a flame to the burner such that the flame is contained within and under the hood;
- (d) using the flame from the burner to heat the poultry litter surface sufficiently to kill microbes and bacteria; and
- (e) using a prime mover to move the flamer over the surface while heating the poultry litter.

Claim 18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously presented) An apparatus for sterilizing a surface, the apparatus having a forward direction corresponding to a towing vehicle forward direction, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a hood for containing a flame;
- (b) an open inlet of the hood comprising a hood opening such that the hood is not sealed to the surface;
- (c) a plurality of burners situated under the hood;
- (d) a hitch for attaching said flamer to a tractor;

- (e) rake teeth disposed forward of the plurality of burners and under the hood; and
- (f) a barrier disposed between the rake teeth and the plurality of burners and under the hood.

Claims 20-21 (Canceled)

**24.** (New) The method of claim 17 wherein said using a prime mover to move the flamer over the surface is done by moving the apparatus along the surface on skids operatively attached to the hood while the skids are in contact with the surface.